



立法會
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

LC Paper No. AS 126/11-12 (01)

來函檔號 YOUR REF :
本函檔號 OUR REF : AM12/01/11(08-12)
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16 February 2012

Dr Vincent CHENG Hoi Chuen, GBS, JP
Chairman of the Independent Commission on Remuneration for
Members of the Executive Council and the Legislature, and
Officials under the Political Appointment System of the HKSAR

Dear Dr CHENG

**Review of the remuneration package
of Legislative Council Members**

Further to my letter to you on 1 February 2012, I write to confirm that the Subcommittee on Members' Remuneration and Operating Expenses Reimbursement ("the Subcommittee") would not have any specific proposal for the remuneration of the Members of the Fifth Legislative Council ("LegCo"). However, we wish to reiterate the need for a long-term mechanism for determining LegCo Members' remuneration to save unnecessary arguments over the subject once every four years. The remuneration so determined should be able to reflect the important role of the Legislature and the constitutional status of LegCo Members under the Basic Law.

Members of the Subcommittee have also asked me to urge the Independent Commission to complete its consideration of our submission on the enhancement of the level of Members' Operating Expenses Reimbursement ("OER") expeditiously to address to some extent the great difficulty LegCo Members are now facing in maintaining a team of good quality staff to assist them in their work.

As we have pointed out in our submission earlier, staff retention is a big problem faced by LegCo Members. As revealed in the survey conducted by the Secretariat, the median length of service of LegCo Members' staff is less

than 3 years, and the annual turnover rate of full-time staff is as high as 34%, a level which none of us could accept. The majority of LegCo Members who have difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitable staff consider that these difficulties are mainly caused by poor career prospect, low salaries, irregular and long working hours, and inadequate fringe benefits. To retain experienced staff and maintain a basic service in their offices, quite a number of Members have to pay out of their own pockets to provide increments and gratuities while others who cannot afford to meet the shortfall through their own means will have to tolerate a high turnover of staff.

Over the years, the variety and complexity of issues dealt with by Members, and the sizes of constituencies and geographic areas served by Members have increased substantially. These have rendered the present level of resources provided for Members neither sufficient for setting up a reasonable number of offices in the districts they serve nor manning them with the necessary staff with salaries commensurate with their qualification and experience.

In order to enable Members to recruit and retain a team of good quality staff in support of their legislative functions and duties, there is a pressing need to revise the level of the OER to suit the actual needs of Members. We hope the Independent Commission would consider the relevant factors and agree with our proposal to increase the level of Members' OER with retrospective effect from 1 October 2011.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely



(Ms Emily LAU)

Chairman, Subcommittee on Members'
Remuneration and Operating
Expenses Reimbursement

c.c. All members of the Independent Commission
Director of Administration
All Hon Members of the Legislative Council